

cipient "hitches" of its wings while opening them only part way.

Possibly slow-motion pictures might reveal important differences in the wing-flashing of patterned and clear-winged Mimidae, or even in the Common Mockingbird when in feeding and in threat situations. I have not seen wing-flashing described for nestling Brown Thrashers. Any differences between their wing actions and those of nestling Common Mockingbirds might be especially significant.

An observation on *M. polyglottos* in Austin, Texas, in mid-November, 1946, seems worth including here, because of its unusual setting. A luxuriant growth of Moonflower (*Ipomoea Bona-nox*), trellised out a foot from the house and covering an entire wall and windows, was then untouched by frost. As I sat quietly near a window, my attention was caught by a Mockingbird wing-flashing inside the vines, about eight inches from the screen.

With its back squarely to me, the bird was opening and closing its wings with the usual jerky positionings, except that the vines seemed to hamper full extension at times and once almost threw the bird off balance. Apparently searching the foliage, the bird did not move about between flashings but instead turned its head from side to side with deliberation, sometimes peering up and down. Presently it jumped a few inches to a new footing in the vines and flashed the wings again.

This routine was repeated several times, though the bird did not progress over two yards. I noticed the wings were extended more fully as space permitted. Sometimes the movements were a mere "elbowing" in close quarters or extension was uneven when the wing toward the wall had freedom and the other was cramped by the vines. I saw no food taken, no other creature among the leaves. There was, I knew, a large Scaly Tree Lizard (probably *Sceloporus olivaceus*) that frequented the vines; but the bird did not center its attention on any particular spot and its general attitude suggested tranquillity. At no time did the bird seem to be aware of the observer.—LOVIE M. WHITAKER, 1204 W. Brooks Street, Norman, Oklahoma, January 26, 1957.

Brood capture involving conflict between two female Mallards.—In April, 1953, a banded female Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), returned to nest on a small artificial marsh near Norwich, Chenango County, New York, where she had been released the previous July. She was one of 10 game farm-reared, six-week old Mallards, equally divided as to sex, that were liberated on the marsh. Her mate wore an unidentified band, but may also have been from the same release.

From her clutch of 12 eggs she brought off only four ducklings on or about May 18. Sometime between late May and June 9, she lost one of the four, but the remaining three survived and were able to fly by the middle of July.

Also on the marsh, an unbanded female Mallard was rearing a brood of 10, hatched about July 1. The second female and her brood regularly remained on the opposite side of the marsh, away from the brood of three.

When the young of the banded female were able to fly she was in flightless condition. Apparently she still had an unusually strong "brood instinct," for she fought the unbanded female for possession of the brood of 10. Actual conflict, initiated by the banded bird, involving extended pursuits that resulted in scattering of the young, was observed on three occasions. By July 25, one week after she was last seen with her original three, the banded female had taken over the brood of 10, and the dispossessed female apparently had been driven from the marsh. Nine of the 10 were reared by the foster-mother. They were observed to fly on September 7, when the banded female was caught. At this late date the bird was still flightless with primary feathers just breaking their sheaths.

During the rearing of the original brood the banded female was accompanied by her mate whenever observed. He assisted in driving off other ducks that ventured too close to the young. When she possessed the new brood he deserted her, but remained with the three young even when they were flushed from the pond. He was comparatively slow in progressing into eclipse plumage but was flightless for only about two weeks. The female, on the other hand, was flightless for an abnormally long time, possibly as long as two months, for she was unable to fly on July 18 and her primaries still were sheathed on September 7.

With regard to brood capture, an interesting case was reported to me by Professor G. A. Swanson, who observed it on his farm near Ithaca, New York, during the summer of 1954. Two pairs of Mallards nested on the farm, the first bringing off a brood of six late in June, and the other a brood of three a few days later. Both were apparently re-nestings following unsuccessful first attempts. Several times during their first two weeks, the two broods of ducklings were observed on the same pond, and the size difference could readily be ascertained. Sometimes the two ducks fed near each other and the ducklings intermingled, and on a number of occasions when the broods were separated there were five ducklings with one and four with the other. The fourth one clearly had been transferred from its original parent to the second, since the size difference was still noticeable. Still later, the division was six and three again, but one brood consisting of three younger and three older ducklings, indicating that there had been still another transfer. At no time, however, was any fighting noticed between the two females.—STUART S. PETERS, *Department of Conservation, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, March 1, 1957.*

Observations on Mexican birds.—Field trips made to various parts of Mexico over a period of years have disclosed information concerning various birds which it is thought may be of general interest.

Antiturus maculicaudatus. Pit-Sweet.—This bird, called "Spotted-tailed Nighthawk" by Cory (1918) in the "Catalogue of the Birds of the Americas," was listed under the genus *Caprimulgus* by Friedmann, Griscom and Moore (1950. *Pac. Coast Avif.* no. 29) and called "Spot-tailed Whip-poor-will." However, it has habits so different from typical members of *Caprimulgus* that it would seem to be best to retain the older classification. The use of a common name suggesting the call of the bird not only follows the usual custom for birds of the group but gives a shorter and simpler name. The Pit-Sweet is quite common on the savannahs of the coastal plain in the region of the Veracruz-Tabasco border, and has been heard calling over a wide area from the last week in March to the second week in May during visits in different years. On one visit to the region in June no birds were heard. (I have not been in the area in the fall.) During the day the birds hide in the dense woods. The plain between the mountains and the Gulf of Mexico in southern Veracruz, Tabasco, and Chiapas is marked with a multiplicity of low ridges over much of its area. Supposedly the great amount of rainfall has washed away most of the plant food on these ridges. At any rate they support a growth of low grasses, but only very scattered small shrubs and an occasional clump of dwarf palms. About half way down the slopes a dense growth of trees begins and the trees become larger and taller at the bottom, where there is frequently a small creek or swamp. The birds come out in the evening (about 7:00 p.m.), and fly back and forth over the grassy areas. They fly low over the grass (mostly from two to 10 feet above the ground) calling as they go. At times they alight on a small patch of bare gravel between clumps of grass and at times they perch for a short time on a twig of one